1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

occur among the Saramacca people. Nothing has been included either in descriptive detail, in the spoken or unspoken thoughts attributed to a Bush Negro, or in characterization, which has not been given us by our Bush Negro informants or has not been witnessed by ourselves. If the thoughts of Moana Yankuso or of any of the elders who figure in the book seem sophisticated when contrasted with the simplicity of the material life of the Bush Negroes, then it is because the stereotype of the childlike, carefree Negro has been so widely accepted. The subtlety and astuteness of a man like Moana Yankuso, or of Sedefo, our chief paddler and the right-hand man of Yankuso's strongest rival, or of Apanto, the sorcerer, cannot be too emphatically stated.

In view of the political factions on the river, and our concern lest these make capital of the fact that a village had been generous in the confidences given the whites, several villages do not appear under their own names. For Headman Moana Yankuso was an old man when we visited him, and alliances for the succession to his high office were at that time already being formed, alliances which, since his death some three years ago, have undoubtedly been consolidated and made effective for the time when his successor is to be named. Villages, therefore, are in some instances given the names of rapids in the river, and not necessarily the names of the rapids found nearest to the villages of which we are writing. In this manner we have sought to preserve the anonymity of the villages without violating the authenticity of place names. Men and women, as well, with the exception of the priestess Amasina, Moana Yankuso, his daughter Wilhelmina, the bassia of his village, Bibifo, and the Captains of Baikutu, S'ei, and Dahomey do not appear under their own names, but under other typical Saramacca Negro names.

Work of the type we have attempted cannot be accomplished without the cooperation of many persons, and we are privileged to acknowledge here our gratitude to those

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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GLOSSARY AND LINGUISTIC NOTES

THE language of the Saramacca Bush Negroes is called by them the *Saramacca tongo*—the Saramacca tongue. Though there are many African words in ritual and everyday speech, the Saramacca tongo is essentially Negro-Portuguese, with a sprinkling of English and Dutch words. In the city of Paramaribo the Negroes speak *taki-taki*, Negro-English, though Dutch and Portuguese words are also found. The structure of the language of both bush and coastal Negroes is essentially African, that is to say, in all the borrowings it was the word which was borrowed, while the African idiom was retained, so that it may be said that the Negroes speak African dialects translated into English or Portuguese or Dutch. Simple examples of this are such phrases as "carry come" for "bring"; "carry go" for "take away"; or "hunger kills me" for "I am hungry"; or "one time" for "immediately."

For the correspondences between the languages of the Suriname Negroes and of West Africa, we have relied on various dictionaries and grammars of West African languages, and on our own findings made during our field work on the West African coast. In writing the words of Suriname and West African languages in both the glossary and the body of this book, the vowels have the "continental" values, not those given in English. It is to be noted that diacritical marks which would be necessary to indicate the strong nasalization that characterizes Bush Negro speech have been omitted from both text and glossary, in order to simplify the writing of native terms. Finally, we must

[p. 344 is blank]

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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Finally, we must

128 [193] explain that in rendering the plural of native words, we have not employed the terminal "-s" that makes the plural in English, for in this regard we have followed the usage of Saramacca tongo.

A

104 *a*, he, she.

Abina, an important female ancestor. The name may be a modification of *Abena*, a woman's Tuesday name (see under *Afi*). In one village on the Saramacca, a dance known only there, called the *binia*, is said to have been taught by a female ancestor during the "running away time." This fact may have bearing on its origin, as it may point to an ancestor who had come from the Benin (Nigerian) kingdom. The people of Benin are known as the *Bini*.

aboma, boa constrictor.

adiosi, goodbye. From the Portuguese.

adji-boto, a game of counters. This is played in Suriname as it is in the Caribbean, and in Africa. *Adji* is a Dahomean word. In Paramaribo, among the Awka Bush Negroes, and in the Caribbean, the Ashanti name for the game, *wari*, is employed.

Afi, "day name" for a girl born on Friday. The corresponding Friday name for a boy is *Kofi*. These day names are found in bush and town in Suriname. They are met with in Jamaica and names like *Kofi* (Cuffy), *Kwaku* (Quacoo), *Kwasi* (Quashi), are known in the United States. These day names exist among the peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, where they are definitely associated with the soul, in the same manner as they are in Suriname.

Afi'ca, Africa. This is the Saramacca pronunciation of the word. While known on the river, it is less used than the expression *neng'e konde*, literally, "Negro kingdom." The word *konde* is used interchangeably for kingdom and village. The word *to*, for example, in Dahomey, is used in the same way.

Afrekete, a Saramacca goddess, whose origin is Dahomean. In Dahomey her genealogy differs from the one given in Suriname. Dahomeans say she is the daughter of *Agbe* and *Naete*, gods of the sea.

agida, the great drum of the Saramacca trio of drum types. In Paramaribo, when the earth spirits are called, a spirit named *Agida* is invoked as one of the earth pantheon.

ago, ancestors. It is said in Dahomey that among the ancient inhabitants this Saramacca meaning was known.

agosu, name given a child born feet foremost. The same name is given such children in Dahomey and in Haiti.

Akantamasu, the god of the ant hill. A Gold Coast name.

akra, see *kra*.

ambe, an exclamation said to be a contraction of the phrase "by my mother's womb."

Amusi, name of Dahomean derivation.

Anansi, spider. *Anansi* is the trickster in the cycle of stories which bear his name. The *Anansi* stories on the Gold Coast and in the New World are like the Br'er Rabbit stories in the United States. In the New World, aside from

/144 cont./

241 [177] time that the runaway slaves took these with them from the plantations then in existence.

It is therefore worthwhile in various respects to explore what is 241 being cultivated. The following summary has been put together 114 from the data of my own observations and from information pro- ●[128] vided by various Bush Negroes. This list is not complete; what is lacking, however, is probably of minor importance.

A. Cultivated Crops That Are Grown on the Food Grounds

244 Bitter cassava (kasàba).

[262] This is the most important crop, from which the cassava bread and kwak are made. One plants the shoots in December, but also in March and April. After 12 months the harvest begins; in case of a food shortage they are dug after only seven months. Yellow and white varieties are distinguished according to the color of the contents of the tubers. To the yellow varieties belong: witti tiki, which is kept on the grounds up to two years, blaka tiki, which stands on the grounds only one year, and taja tiki, which provides produce for a long time and is especially good for the making of kwak. To the white varieties belong: amosiang, sanang kasaba, [252] and domberi. Cassava bread is made from this. In the making of kwak all the colors are mixed together in order to obtain the desired yellow color. Each variety separately provides a less tasty product.

252 [184] On the Marowijne one makes more kwak (kwaka) than cassava bread, while on the Surinam River and the Saramacca only cassava bread /a map and Figs. 1-14 appear here/ /145/ is baked with the flour. Kwak is prepared in the following manner: The tubers, after they are peeled, are put in water in a korjaal (1) for two

1. korjaal = boat.

days and then grated. This grated cassava is then allowed to sour in a box or a korjaal; after that the grated cassava is expressed

[text continues on p. 21]

128 /519 cont./
163 Fertility. We have classed the women, according to the year of birth, into four categories, for fertility has varied considerably in the course of time. The study has been made by five-year age-blocks. The table below /see p. 16 / shows the cumulative fertility (total of figures obtained for the various age-blocks from 15 to 50 years of age). For the women of categories three and four, the number obtained is the result of an extrapolation.

842 Among the Boni there is no custom leading to a diminution of fertility, and the voluntary restriction of births is unknown.

163 The vertical fall of fertility between categories one and
164 two results from the invasion of venereal diseases, which seems
[177] to have coincided with the period (1920) when the search for the balata brought into the interior a heavy traffic of adventurers
[831] accompanied by numerous prostitutes. The very free morals of the Boni favor the propagation of the illness, which, since that time, has not ceased its ravages, stemmed only, but not eliminated, by the medical effort of these last years.

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163

Category	Born	Cumulative Fertility	Rate of Sterility	Age when half the children were born (9)
		%	%	Years
1	1850—1895	7.30	5	31
2	1896—1915	3.83	21	27
3	1816—1925			
4	1926—1938	4.52	15	27 (9)

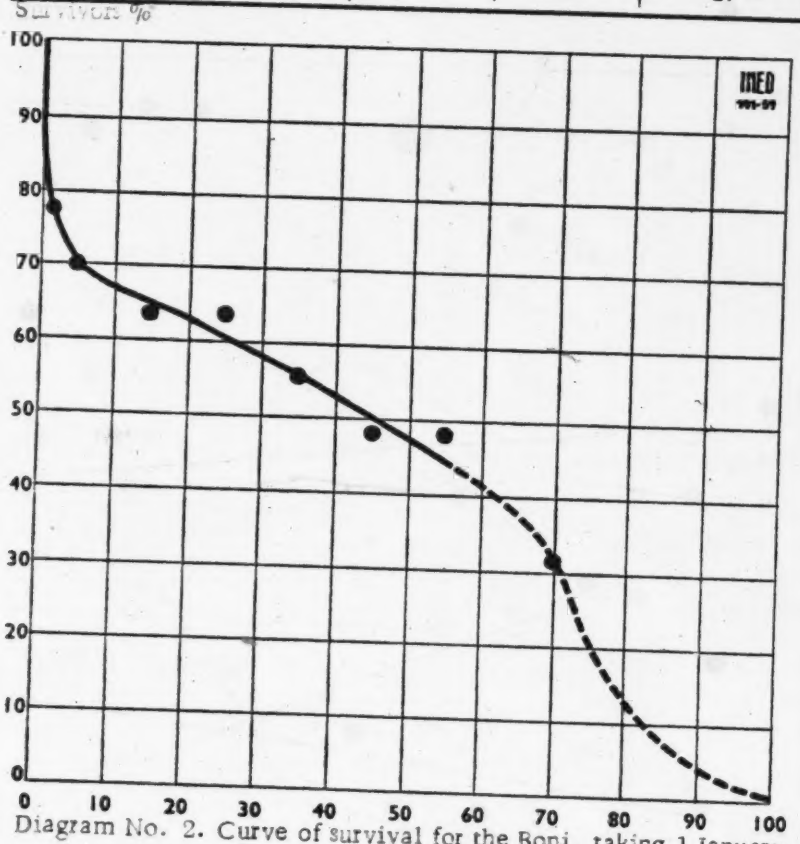

Diagram No. 2. Curve of survival for the Boni, taking 1 January 1950 as the date of reference.

1638. In the evaluation of the net rate of reproduction (cf. p. 523), the
128 average age should be brought in; there is the danger, however, of this being overestimated as a result of errors in the ages; this is why we preferred to substitute for it the median age.

9. The calculation with regard to the women of category 4 could not, in view of their age, give precise results. We preferred to adopt the figure for the preceding category.

/521/

165 Mortality. The principal interest of this study is to establish the
● 128 curve of survival showing, for 100 children born alive, the number surviving at one year, five years, ten years, etc., until the extinction of the group. The life expectancy at birth is given by this curve.

For the Boni, we can make this study with the assumption that the lives of the individuals stopped on the first of January 1950, the date on which one may consider that the conditions which influence mortality have changed, above all as far as the children are concerned.

The study of the mortality of the children born since the first of January 1950, dealt with in part, will furnish useful elements of comparison.

Establishment of the mortality table. Taking up again the records of the 193 women whose lives are completely known to us, and including the children who died in early infancy (10), we have marked down all their children, year by year, on a table.

165 **Table of Mortality Referring to 1 January 1950 (10)**

Year of birth	Deceased children			Surviving on 1-1-50	Surviving Total children	Average age on 1-1-50	Deceased between 1-1-50 & 1-1-58
	0-1 year	0-5 years	More than 5 before 1-1-50			years	
1888 – 1899 inclus.	12 (36 %)	13 (39 %)	5	16	16/33 = 48 %	50	2
1900 – 1909 inclus.	15 (28 %)	20 (37 %)	8	26	26/54 = 48 %	45	1
1910 – 1919 inclus.	21 (24 %)	30 (35 %)	8	47	47/85 = 55 %	35	1
1920 – 1929 inclus.	20 (21 %)	28 (31 %)	7	59	59/94 = 62 %	25	3
1930 – 1939 inclus.	24 (24 %)	32 (30 %)	8	66	66/106 = 63 %	15	3
1940 – 1949 inclus.	40 (23 %)	.....	1	122	122/175 = 70 %	5	8

165 128 [856] [862] 10. We were particularly careful in asking about children who died in early infancy, an important cause of error in populations without civil records. The age of the children at the time of death has been estimated according to the following guidelines based on the study

/521 cont./

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10. (cont.)
of the development of ten children born in 1956 and 1957: sitting up, 7 months; beginning to walk, 1 year (a remarkably clear guideline among the Boni); end of weaning, 14 to 18 months. Beyond that, the ages were estimated by comparison with children living at the time of the inquiry.

165

The survival curve results directly from these values. It shows the high mortality of children (30% during the first five years).

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165 It is not possible to obtain directly a value for the survival
128 rate for ages beyond 55 years, but it is possible to obtain an approximate value from the age pyramid. Calculation (11) gives: proportion surviving at the age of 70: 30%.

11. The calculation consists of comparing the lengths of the segments of the average curve of the pyramid corresponding to the ages 55 and 70, having taken into account the increase in births between 1888 and 1903, deduced from the rate of reproduction.

165 Table of Mortality Referring to January 1958

Year of birth	Deceased before 1-1-50	Deceased between 1-1-50 & 1-1-58	Surviving on 1-1-58	Proportion Surviving	Average age on 1-1-58
				%	Years
1888-1899 inclus...	18	2	14	41	65
1900-1909 inclus...	28	1	25	46	54
1910-1919 inclus...	38	1	46	54	44
1920-1929 inclus...	35	3	56	59	24
1930-1939 inclus...	40	3	64	59	24
1940-1949 inclus...	53	8	114	65	14
1950-1957 inclus....	.....	45, of which 35 under 1 year	154	77.5	4

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161 Thus during the period 1895 to 1925, the Boni population
●[128] doubled with each generation. These results are confirmed by
(173) the study of the genealogies. The present-day Boni, with the
[613] exception of about 5% of them who belong to recently founded lineages, are descended by known filiation from seven women who lived at the end of the eighteenth century.

It is possible that before the period to which this inquiry refers epidemics were produced and struck certain villages in particular, destroying entire lineages. In fact we cannot say anything certain about the evolution of the population before 1890. Let us only remember that this rate of reproduction of 200% per generation of 31 years represents the normal rate for the Refugee Blacks, in the absence of large epidemics and of venereal diseases and before any medical aid.

During the period 1925-1942, the Boni population did not vary (rate of reproduction $\frac{105}{100}$).

Since 1940, it has been increasing slightly, by 25% per 27 years, that is just under 1% per year.

163 Birth rate and mortality rate. Demographic balance. From 1
165 January 1956 to 31 December 1957, i.e., in two years, 39 children were born in the villages on the French bank (660 persons); and 21 persons died (including 5 children born during this period).

Rate of birth: 2.9% per year.

Rate of mortality: 1.6% per year.

161 Rate of increase: 1.3% per year.

The rate of increase of 1.3%, which corresponds incidentally to the theoretical calculation indicated above, is very much below that of the population of Cayenne and of the communes of
[164] the coast. If one considers that before 1920 it reached the remarkable value of 3% per year, one realizes the extent of the disaster brought about by venereal diseases.

/1/

INTRODUCTION

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[122] In the course of three missions of the Institut Géographique National in 1948, 1949, and 1952, we lived in close relationship with the tribe of the Boni, who supplied us with the bearers and boat crews indispensable for travel in the country. From the first contacts, we felt a deep interest in this worthy people, made up in the 18th century of rebel slaves escaped from the plantations of Surinam.

114
[121] Taking advantage of the rare moments of respite allowed us by our work, we tried to study the various aspects of their material, social, and religious life. The men who accompanied us were for the most part young men who had only a limited understanding of the tradition of their group: in addition, the geographic work compelling constant moves in the uninhabited forest, investigator and informants were more often than not prey to worry and fatigue.

[101]
[121] At the end of the mission to fix the French Guiana-Brazil boundary in January, 1957, we were able to undertake a systematic investigation based on a detailed inventory of the population of the villages.

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[122] A fifth mission made under the aegis of the Institut Français d'Amérique Tropicale (IFAT) from October, 1957 to February, 1958 permitted us to fill part of the gaps in our work. Some complementary data were collected in October-November, 1958 on the occasion of another trip devoted mainly to the study of the Indians of the Upper Maroni.

128 The present work is exclusively devoted to the social life of the Boni. The information we assembled on their material life and their art, as well as their demographic situation, will be the subject of separate publications. /blank page/

/20 cont./

613 571 We have said that the recently founded lineages, being of only very small size, cannot constitute a distinct social unit and are placed under the authority of one of the lo heads. That is not a condition imposed by force or any moral coercion whatever, but a practical social necessity. A lineage, reduced in numbers though it may be, keeps in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks imprescriptible collective rights; and if these members agree to group in a separate village and work separate soil, nobody will stand in their way.

128 613 614 [115] [829] Such are the elements which stand out after a first study of the kin groups as it can be deduced from interrogating the heads of these units. It leaves unresolved some important problems:

The Boni have the idea that their kin groups are lineages in the real sense of the term. Nevertheless, questioning on genealogies does not permit all to /21/ go back to the founding ancestress. Three of them, the most important numerically, prove in this respect to be divided into several fractions. Can we be sure that these fractions are actually of the same origin and that the people concerned are not deceiving themselves in believing it? In the social structure of the Refugee Blacks are there no mechanisms leading toward assimilation, to fusion of groups of heterogeneous origin?

We cannot answer these questions directly. First of all it is indispensable to study the conception that the Boni have of kinship ties within the matrilineage. Then we shall examine the genealogical tables of the various lineages, and for those that the study of genealogies shows to be divided into several fractions, we shall study the interrelations of these fractions.

601 613 Kinship within the matrilineage: The kinship terms translate a purely classificatory system. The principle of classificatory kinship

613 614 /23 cont./ Not one of the members of the group could trace back to the common ancestress; yet these three fractions together behave as [601] [784] a single lineage. All its members know their mutual appellations "brother," "uncle," etc. All are subject to the same kunu.

The law of exogamy is respected within each fraction, but 613 614 582 183 there are seven cases of unions between members of different fractions; these unions are disapproved of in principle, but they are tolerated.

Thus, on the subject of exogamy, we see the thought of the Refugee Blacks breaks away from the rigorous principle on which their social order is based. It is the actually known genealogy which counts in their eyes on this point.

613 614 128 [115] [601] In December, 1958 we were able to reconstitute the complete genealogy of the group (Fig. 4), thanks to the memories of the doyenne of the group, Ma Imma, who had lived for a very long time isolated in a village of the Maroni estuary. The data thus reconstituted are in complete agreement with the kinship appellations among members of the various fractions. /24/

/Fig. 4 appears here./

The case of the Kotika lineage is thus particularly interesting, for we find ourselves knowing its genealogy completely when its members know it no more than partially.

613 614 [602] Study of this group shows that the forgetting of kinship ties has no effect on the physical grouping of the lineage and its functioning as a social unit.

It has direct repercussions only on the observation of the principle of exogamy. Thus the way in which exogamy is understood and observed appears to us from now on as a secondary criterion having no certain value for the recognition of a common origin.

[621] Some Djuka and Saramaka have settled among the members of the Kotika lineage, but as individuals.

[621] The Lapé (La Paix) lineage, whose name alludes to one of the great plantations of the Cottica River in the 18th century, is

[See p. 34, Category 116 -- Analyst]

/40 cont./

125 [123] In spite of the relations of trust developed between the Boni and ourselves in the course of the work carried out together during four long missions, we were able to take this census only progressively and indirectly, by using simultaneously the following procedures:

—Study of the genealogy of the groups, going up from woman to woman up to the founding ancestress, then going back down from her. These genealogical tables, some of which extend [166] over nine generations and include more than 160 persons, brought [736] to light a certain number of temporarily absent people and individuals who lived away from the villages, isolated in the middle of the Creole gold miners, but continuing to make up part of their group; they also brought to light a certain number of young people and orphan children taken in by distant relatives who would not have spoken about them directly. But on this point, gaps remain;

[126] —Detailed plan of the villages and interrogation of the village heads as to the persons living in each house;

—Interrogation of the women about their dead and surviving children;

—General verification with the help of perfectly trustworthy informants who possessed a thorough knowledge of the genealogy of the groups.

[162] The census, stopped on January 1, 1958, covered 811 persons of whom 667 /41/ were from the villages of the French bank and 144 from the Surinam bank (Kotika). As for the latter, we [765] questioned them individually when they came to the French bank, especially when they came to attend the end of mourning festivities in Boniville in October, 1957. The Kotika census is less [128] exact than that of the French villages, and in addition we were [126] not able to make a plan of the village. For this reason we have not reproduced it in the present work, where only the corresponding genealogical table appears.

/41 cont./

621 The principle behind the constitution of the Boni villages
613 is, as we have said, the localization of the matrilineage. Men
[591] and women live in the village of their maternal kin; the wife does not leave her village to join her husband, who comes to visit her from time to time without ceasing, himself, to live in the midst of his own lineage.

The composition of each village thus corresponds, at least in principle, to the group of living people on the genealogical table. But a certain number of exceptions are observed:

[167] -A certain number of men (about 20 out of 800 persons) have emigrated for good and can no longer be counted in the population of the villages;

[619] -On the other hand, a dozen Djuka and Saramaka married
[591] to Boni women have settled permanently in the villages and have been included in the census.

125 We have tried to estimate with as much precision as possible
128 the age of the people concerned, by means of events of known
[173] date which they remember, from the trip of the explorer Crevaux (1878) to the war 1939-45. We have established a local chronology, reproduced as an appendix at the end of the present chapter.

125 The demographic survey, which has been the subject of another publication (1), was conducted parallel with the sociological investigation.

[113] 1. "Etude démographique comparée des Noirs Réfugiés Boni et des Indiens Oayana du Haut-Maroni /Comparative Demographic Study of the Boni Refugee Blacks and the Oayana Indians of the Upper Maroni/," in Population, éditions de l'INED, 1959, No. 3. 2 A

2 A [See 5: Hurault, This file-- Analyst.]

/41 cont./

125 We estimate the gaps in the census at less than 3 per cent.
[128] These gaps involve essentially the adolescents and young people orphaned or raised by others than their parents.

The adults over 35 years old were practically all known
[648] individually to us. Children under 10 years could be counted very exactly thanks to the distribution of milk carried out since 1956 by the Maripasoula medical center.

125 Classification. The classification of the population was made by
128 village of residence.
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For each woman we have indicated her successive unions and the children who issued from them. The sign † means deceased, the sign ✝ divorce, the sign ✝† means that the husband is deceased but after the break-up of the union.

The listings for women preceded by an asterisk * indicate that they can be regarded as complete from the demographic point of view (children living and deceased).

A double asterisk ** indicates that the listing can in addition be regarded as complete with regard to successive marriages and divorces (2).

2. We avoided asking directly these questions to which the women replied unwillingly. The information was obtained indirectly by questioning brothers and husbands. It could be obtained complete for only about 30 per cent of the women.

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125 128 162 The name of each individual is printed in boldface type once where he can be considered as habitually residing.

Children under 15 are considered as living with the persons responsible for their education. If it was not possible to obtain accurate information about this, they are considered as living with their mother.

Each listing bears a number, for example Dju D7, making it possible to find again the individual's place in the genealogical table. In the example noted, refer to the table of the Dju lineage, line D, no. 7.

601 128 [115] Genealogical tables. These are of unequal value according to the age and the memory of the old people consulted. In general they go back to three generations beyond the oldest of the old men now alive.

[165] Since the Boni show remarkable longevity, and the average difference in age between two generations can be estimated at 31 years, one can assume as probable that the most distant ancestress known of each lineage was born between the middle and the end of the 18th century. For example, if we assume that [613] Kuluba, the ancestress of the Awara Bakka, was about 100 years old in 1956, we can take for granted that she was born about 1856 and that her great-grandmother was born about 1760.

613 The most ancient ancestress known of each lineage is certainly not the foundress. It is infinitely probable that the founding of these groups goes back to the beginning of the 18th century and that they were born on the same plantations where the ancestors of the Refugee Blacks were slaves; this would explain the names borne by the lineages, names which nearly always allude to a plantation or to a slave-owner.

601 128 In a general way, the memory of the Boni is very sure, and the information given in the form: Ma X... begot So-and-so,

/42 cont./

601 So-and-so, and So-and-so, can be regarded as sure. On the other
128 hand, we have considered that there was a break in the genealogy when, going back in time, we arrived at this single datum: Ma X... was the sister of Ma Y..., for it could be a question of kinship in the classificatory sense.

No form of birthright existing among the Boni, there is some uncertainty about the order of birth of brothers and sisters for persons long dead. We have adopted the order kept by oral tradition without trying to rectify it.

613 In many African populations a special tradition is connected
814 with perpetuating the memory of the founder, at least his name,
829 the place of his grave. With the present-day Boni absolutely nothing like this is found; they are not concerned in any way with the true foundress of their lineage; no memory, no legend, not even a name has come down to them. It even seems as though these distant ancestors interest them little because they are less able to act in behalf of their present-day descendants. Indeed, with each new generation the memory of an ancient one dies out.

173 On our first trip in 1948 we called attention, unfortunately without
[126] noting them down precisely, to /43/ very interesting oral traditions going back to the time of slavery, especially the names of the slave-owners who showed themselves to be the most cruel. In
[814] 1952 the last old man who knew them had died; the very memory of what he had said was already effaced.

829 As a matter of fact, Boni thought, strictly practical and
602 utilitarian, is concerned principally with keeping the memory of the part of the genealogy indispensable to the living to know their kinship ties. Memory of women whose posterity has died out and of men who did nothing remarkable is dead from the second generation on.

114 Since none of the travelers of the 19th century understood
613 the importance of taking genealogies, it is probable that the names

/43 cont./

114 613 of the true foundresses and the circumstances of the formation of the lineages (invaluable information which must still have been present in the memory of the old men at the end of the last century) are lost forever.

128 601 In order to simplify the drawing up of the genealogical tables, we have eliminated individuals deceased before adult age.

128 551 601 162 [101] Names. To insure the necessary anonymity to our informants without diminishing the accuracy of the statement, we have changed a large part of the names. The fictitious names under which individuals are designated in the genealogical tables as well as in the inventory of the population were mostly taken from the Djuka, who belong to the same cultural and linguistic group; in other cases, in order "to figure" the census we used a more complex process consisting in exchanging the names of two persons. Children younger than 15 are designated simply by an initial (1).

[648] [123] 1. It is particularly disagreeable to the Refugee Blacks to have their children's names known by Europeans, with the exception of the doctor. All systematic questioning on this subject runs into clear hostility.

114 609 Despite these precautions, we recommend that travelers provided with this work make no allusion in front of the Boni to the facts related in it; the Refugee Blacks are very proud and cannot allow an outsider to penetrate forthwith into their family privacy. That would provoke lively hostility toward the indiscreet person and would hinder later work.

114 128 The table of correspondence between true and fictitious names is held at the disposal of sociologists who may wish to conduct studies on the Boni.

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Kormotibo and Asisi-Dipélu Villages

Dipélu II lo

[128] [361] We did not judge it useful to include the plan of the habitat of this group, consisting of two hamlets which are badly kept up and in decay.

[162] As of January 1, 1958: 62 persons, of whom 31 are children and adolescents of less than 16 years.

[591] Adult inhabitants whose residence in these villages is not normal:

△ Alémin 1880 (Afi lineage)	has always lived isolated
○ Magdaléna 1912 (Afi lineage) (raising 4 children under 16)	came to live with her husband Léon (Dip. II, † in 1954); remained there afterward.
△ Doïchiman 1934 (Afi l.)	raised by his mother Magdaléna, lives near her.
△ Dokwé 1938 (Afi l.)	idem
○ Gongolon 1937 (Afi l.) (raising a child)	idem
○ Mauda 1935 (Afi l.)	idem
○ Ninga 1899 (Papaïston 2)	separated from her group after a disagreement.
△ Bénu 1928	Ninga's son, followed his mother.

Total: 8 persons raising 4 children under 16 years.

/57 cont./

613 The descendants of ○ Monika † were scattered among these
621 three villages. △ Kwau, the eldest, after living at Apatu until
591 the age of 70 years, moved in 1958 to Boniville; ○ Djalufu lived from childhood at L'Enfant Perdu, Cécilia was raised in Boniville where she has lived since.

Again, let us cite the example of the descendants of Wétiti (Papaïston 1). Out of her 12 adult children and grandchildren living in January, 1958, seven established themselves with her in the habitation she founded on the estuary of the Maroni several hundred kilometers from Boni country, two live in Boniville (where the Papaïston lineage delegated a few of its members to live close to the grand man), three came back to live in Papaïston. In spite of this dispersion, there is perfect understanding among these brothers and sisters who remain in regular relationship.

128 Emigration; immigration; founding of new lineages. It is not
167 possible to give rigorous figures on this subject because it is very difficult to make a clear distinction between temporary and permanent emigrants. It does happen that a man /58/ who left a long time before and on whom they no longer counted comes back to take up again his place in ordinary living. It also happens that a man who left for a short trip prolongs his absence indefinitely.

167 Nevertheless, it can be asserted that long lasting emigration affects only a very small percentage of the Boni, and men almost exclusively. Out of 810 persons in the census, in registering the names of their brothers, sisters, and children, we noted only some 20 emigrants considered as permanently lost to their group, including four women.

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166 619 It is fitting to make an exception of the case of OWétiti (Papaïston) and OMa Imma (Kotika), who separated from their groups with their numerous descendants in order to found villages on the lower course of the river. These groups continue to consider themselves Boni; they are the nuclei of future villages.

[162] [621] For the same reasons it is difficult to get exact figures on immigration. About 100 Djuka and Saramaka have founded farming villages in Boni country but keep all their ties with their villages of origin; some 30 of them have married Boni women; one can estimate that some 15 have completely bound up their fate with the Boni and can be considered as integrated into the villages in which they have settled.

16 • 128 [562] All in all one can estimate that emigration and immigration of adult men, both very insignificant, compensate for each other; they have practically no importance on the social plane (since only the residence of the women has any influence upon the grouping of the lineages) or on the demographic plane; with the Boni the pyramid of ages constructed from the census of the villages represents very faithfully the demographic state of the population and lends itself to precise calculations of mortality (1).

> 1. It is not the same for the majority of African populations either because of emigration to the cities or polygamy. The presence of several average polygamists in a village is enough to render completely erroneous the counts of cross-sections by age.

166 571 591 613 The founding of new lineages results from the immigration of several Djuka women, some having come to settle permanently near their husbands, others brought up by their fathers in a Boni village. Half a dozen such cases occur in each generation, but

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571 626 156 [81] [761] that he can protect himself only by submitting to the law of the group. In this doubtless must be seen the deep reason for the importance attached to death and mourning, events around which is centered the activity of the usual societies and which entail a veritable mobilization.

626 971 It would be very difficult to condense the custom of the Refugee Blacks into a rigorous code. If one wished to do it, one would have to write as Article 1: "The living will conform to the will of the gods and the ancestors as it is expressed through the mouths of those possessed and by the movements of the bearers of the dead."

613 619 Each one of the tribes of the Refugee Blacks is formed of a certain number of matrilineages.

There is no limit on the number of these lineages, and it can be asserted that if any lineage whatever, detached from another tribe, asks to live in the midst of the Boni, it will be welcomed. From the first generation the children consider themselves as Boni.

In this regard one can cite the example of the Awara Bakka 3 lineage and that of the small lineage founded in Boniville by a Djuka woman, wife of Grand Man Ochi. All her descendants consider themselves Boni. /64/

[829] [643] But only the great lineages which constituted the tribe at its origin are social units recognized by the grand man, and only their heads are called to be members of the council.

● 128 We shall study first the interior functioning of the lineage, then the institutions going beyond the framework of the lineages.

423 613 671 [428] /77 cont./ Land held by right of use cannot be sold nor rented, but only loaned. Neither can it be transmitted by inheritance; this would be entirely contrary to the thinking and custom of the Refugee Blacks, hostile to everything that would violate the legal joint possession of the lineage. Inheritance can affect only the harvest in process [425] from clearings. Once this harvest is made, the land can be occupied by any member of the lineage, man or woman, who wishes to cultivate it; and if there is any dispute, it is obligatorily settled within the lineage; the grand man would refuse to judge it. Kinship degree /78/ does not enter in, at least in principle, since they can say to each other "brother," "uncle," or "grandfather" in the classificatory sense.

423 428 The only attenuation of the rigor of this principle provided for by custom is that upon the death of a woman, her daughters have a right of priority to utilize her lands.

423 241 128 The Refugee Blacks have a clear tendency to remain faithful all their lives to the same clearings. The study we have made of the clearings in Boni country gives poor information on the history of each clearing, for it would have been necessary to be able to consult on the spot a large number of people, which we were not able to do; nevertheless it allows us to state that in the neighborhood of the residence villages, individuals keep their right of use of a clearing for the length of their lives.

42 241 Here is for example the transmission of rights over clearings 101 to 112 /sic/ (see genealogical table of the Dju lo) (1).

1. See plate at the end of this work: Distribution of lands in the neighborhood of the principal Boni villages.

[Lands of The Awara Bakka lo (Asisi Boni Village)]

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We were not able to carry this study out exhaustively because the great mass of lands cultivated by the Awara Bakka are situated on the Surinam bank. The clearings summarized here are grouped in a zone called Ingi Udu; they are served by two landing places or dégrads, borrowed exclusively by the Awara Bakka.

No.	Last User	Year	By What Right	Duration of Last Fallow Period
61 O	Kyéti (Aw.B.1, E30); cl. cut by her brother Agibidon	1954	member of the Awara Bakka lo, 1st fraction	cut on old secondary forest
62 O	Mani (Afi lineage); clearing cut by her husband Galmo	1956	member of the Afi lineage, living in Asisi	2 years
63 O	Kyéti; clearing cut by her brother Agibidon	1956	Awara Bakka, 1st fraction, Asisi village	2 years; cut 4 times in all, the 1st about 1949 /91/
65 O	Akanté (Aw.B.3); clearing cut by her husband Poopu	1956	id. 3rd fraction	2 years

[Papaïston Village]

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No.	Last User	Year	By What Right	Duration of Last Fallow Period
114 ○	Gou (P1, F8); clearing cut by her husband Akwali		id.	id.
115 ○	Puti (P2, F71); clearing cut by her husband Maïpa	1951	id.	cleared off for the 1st time on old secondary forest
116 ○	Héléna (P1, F2); clearing cut by her husband Baliki	1951	id.	id.

[562] These six clearings are held by women of the Papaïston lineage, in accordance with the residence principle of the Refugee Blacks.

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/96/ The Social System Illuminated by the Study of Implantation on the Soil

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Study of the clearings in the neighborhood of the farming villages gives exact information about the structure of the kin groups which cannot be obtained by direct interrogation.

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--Transmission of rights over land within the lineage fraction having the same residence constitutes an imprescriptible legal principle, to which one refers as the conclusive argument to settle every dispute;

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/99/ That this system is perfectly workable has been sufficiently demonstrated by the regular expansion for two centuries of the tribes of Refugee Blacks and by the good functioning of their institutions.

182 Thus the basic instability of the Indians of Guiana cannot be attributed to the influence of the geographical environment alone. It comes essentially from social and psychological factors.

/100/ STUDY OF FARMING HABITATIONS

● 128 We are now going to study the functioning of the farming habitations under the same aspects:

--Structure (composition of each one, kinship ties);

--Territorial implantation: nature and extent of rights over the land;

--Functioning.

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184 Not all Boni have a farming habitation; about two-thirds of them are satisfied with the lands they occupy near the residence villages.

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613 The farming habitations we are going to study more especially and which are situated between the mouth of the Inini and Simayé Falls to the south, group about a hundred persons belonging to the Dju, Lapé, Awara Bakka, and Papaïston lineages. Another group of farming habitations situated a little south of Kormotibo, which we shall study briefly and only so far as their composition is concerned, bring together about 60 persons. Finally, other very dispersed farming habitations exist, belonging principally to the Kotika lineage, some in the Maripasoula region, others in the Abattis-Kotika Falls /region/.

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[162] On the whole, the Boni farming habitations cannot be compared either as to importance or stability with the Djuka farming villages which are placed at intervals on the middle course of the Maroni, grouping 3,000 to 3,500 persons: this is easy to understand: the Djuka, continually short of land, are obliged,

55 [553] /123 cont./
and supplanting the others, but in numerous cases the names are used concurrently; in general an individual is designated among his maternal relatives by his pikin nɛm, while the people of other villages designate him by his gaã nɛm or by a cognomen. It has happened to us many a time in the course of the same conversation to hear the same individual designated by two or three different names.

[125] [128] It goes without saying that this custom makes any census of the Refugee Blacks impracticable, for as long as one does not know individually the members of a lineage and their genealogy, it is impossible to understand anything.

Nevertheless, one must not see in this a defense reaction with respect to the European administration. The Refugee Blacks find it completely normal to have several names at a time, for they do not have the notion of the identity of a name with a person.

Thus one of our boatmen was Fintiman to his maternal relatives, Gobiyo to his father and part of his friends, Loamba to his paternal grandfather, and Nakiyu to his first wife.

55 553 Choice of names. Names are highly varied and their choice does not follow any fixed rule; it is in the exclusive domain of fancy.

A large number are constituted of simple onomatopoeia: Tyutyu, Dada, Dodo, Dudu, etc. (which may be applied indiscriminately to man or woman). Dodo's mother explained to us the reason for her choice: dodo was the refrain of an air which often sang in her head while she was pregnant. /124/

55 177 Again are pointed out:

--More or less deformed European names: Afayèl (Rafaèl), Modèl, Pasensi (Patience), Félisi (Félix), Sophie, Toïna (Antonia). Certain names are deformed European proper names; for example: Sota for Chotard (name of an official in Saint-Laurent);

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429 56 861 582 Until very recent times the authority of the guardian had remained very strong and was prolonged very late; he had the right to strike his ward to make him obey, and he exercised his powers until the time when, judging the child's education finished, he authorized him to marry, which formerly seldom happened before 25-27 years.

Fintiman (of Boniville), about 50 years old in 1958, tells that his father, entrusted with his upbringing, did not authorize him to marry before he was completely established as a carpenter and boat-builder, at about the age of 27. Until that age he remained subject to the most tyrannical authority; his father intended especially to forbid him to go out in the evening, and in order to carry on a clandestine affair he had to use nocturnal fishing expeditions as a pretext!

429 884 When a boy's guardian judges his education finished, he helps him to build his house and gives him tools, a trunk containing clothes, and a hammock. Henceforward the boy must make his own way in life.

429 576 601 All during his lifetime he will continue to show the greatest respect to the person who raised him and often, speaking of that person, he will say: "my father" or "my mother."

601 When a Refugee Black says in the course of a conversation, "My father used to do this," he often means the man who brought him up; if he wishes to speak of his true father, he will say, "My own father who made me." Likewise when he says "My grandfather," he usually means a great-uncle. This confusion makes research on family life risky as long as one does not possess any census by names; apparently it has led several authors into error, making them believe that among the Refugee Blacks the father brings up his children himself, when this is on the contrary the exception.

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586 [163] Likewise Pééchina, about 70 years old in 1957, separated from Nachinengé (Kotika) after having spent the greatest part of her life with him and having six children by him.

In order to be able to break thus a long standing union without undergoing moral collapse, it is certainly necessary for the affectivity of each one to be entirely centered on his maternal family.

586 124 Frequency of divorce. This essential aspect of the social life of the Refugee Blacks is not easy to lay hold on by direct interrogation. The women do not willingly talk about their past unions and let go in silence the ones which remained childless. However, we were able to reconstitute with rather great certainty the past life of about a hundred women (mothers, near relatives, or wives of our most reliable informants). These men /"women" -- printing error. -- Tr./ are marked with a double asterisk ** in the population list of the villages.

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[178] It is useful to classify them by age groups relating to the year of birth, for we shall see that the frequency of divorce seems to have increased with time. The groups chosen are the same as for the demographic investigation which we carried on parallel to the sociological study:

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586 [128] The estimate of the average number of divorces for women born before 1896 is probably lower than the actual number, their first divorces not being well known to our informants. It is probably in the neighborhood of two.

586 593 178 The increase in frequency of divorces among young women is striking. It is related to the weakening of the authority, very strong in former times, exercised by mothers over their daughters.

Here are two examples concerning two girls we have known since their childhood.

836 Lomé (L2, F74, Boniville) born in 1938, began to cause people to talk about her in 1954. She was deflowered by N..., who did not want to marry her. Then she had relations with Asadam (K, Boniville), who did not want to marry her either. She was beaten; she continued to see him. Now this is extremely [558] shameful for a girl because it is placing herself in a state of inferiority with respect to a man, when her self-respect consists in making a contract between equals.

582 Her brother Amèmbé beat her, and she ended up by marrying Pitipiti (Aw.B.2, Asisi village), who formally asked for her in marriage in 1956. This marriage lasted less than a year. In 1957 Lomé divorced him to marry Djoni (Kotika village). 586 587

584 Aguba (D u, G14), girl of Asisi-Dju village, born in 1941, had been proposed to with the customary formalities in May, 1956 by Païtiki (L2, Loka village), a young man of 18. It was agreed that the engaged couple would wait two years. But 584 585 Païtiki did not wait and consummated the marriage clandestinely at the end of a few months. Lènga, Aguba's aunt and guardian, became very angry and beat her. She did not give [429] her the pagi until May, 1957. The marriage lasted only a few 586 months. /157/ By the end of 1957 Aguba was breaking off with Païtiki and beginning openly to look for adventures.

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767 According to the moral law of the Refugee Blacks, all work must be paid for. The work of the ɔlɔmã and kisimã is no exception to the rule: the dead person must pay for what is done for him; to this end, his brothers appropriate pieces of cloth from his trunk (about 30 if the dead man was rich) and since that would not suffice, the relatives and friends of the dead man come to swell these assets by giving additional pieces of cloth.

If the dead man was very poor and no longer had cloth in good condition, the people of the lineage must give enough so that at least six may be given to the kisimã and about ten to the ɔlɔmã. If there are too few pieces of cloth for each one to be able to receive a whole one, they are cut up into small pieces, but it is absolutely indispensable for each one to be paid, even if symbolically.

764. Unfolding of the burial rites. These rites are complex, and the ceremonies in which they unfold are always very confused. Even if one is acquainted with the general idea and understands the language rather well, they are very difficult to follow. For [128] clearness in this account, we shall first give a résumé, which will be followed by observations collected in particular cases.

763 The day of the death is taken up by weeping and lamentations and the sending of messengers to the neighboring villages.

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428 178 A tendency which has appeared during recent years in connection with men consists in bequeathing during their lifetime the essential part of their property to the children they have raised.

613 [787] Inheritance of functions and powers. Upon the death of a lineage head, the yɔrka of the dead man is asked whom it wishes to see named. Then the council assembles to proceed with the nomination; it remains free in its choice, the will of the dead man beyond the grave does not have the force of law; but actually, it seems to be most often followed.

As for the function of captain which is common to all the fractions of one lo, the inheritance may pass from one fraction to another.

Ex.: for the Awara Bakka lo, the succession:
Asèmbay (Aw.B.2);
Pèèyon (Aw.B.1);
Kondoku (Aw.B.1).

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CHAPTER VII

BELIEFS

Origin of the Beliefs of the Refugee Blacks

791 • 128 The spiritual life of the Refugee Blacks of the Guianas is intimately bound up with their social life, and the division we are obliged to make for the sake of clearness of the account is very often arbitrary. So we shall try to point out these connections wherever they are essential.

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581 The Refugee Blacks change their attitude immediately as soon as one speaks to them about marriage. Men and women are unanimous in considering marriage as an intolerable violation of individual freedom and as a tie without purpose; they talk about it with veritable indignation, even having the feeling of an offense against morality.

Cults of Possession

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The phenomena of possession are extremely frequent [171] among the Blacks of America (possession by saints or inspiration by the Holy Spirit among the Blacks of Brazil and the United [171] States, voodooism in Haiti). With the Refugee Blacks they make up the very base of religious life to the point of being the normal means of communication between the gods and men; they have profound effects on all social life.

The cults of possession practiced by the Refugee Blacks of Guiana differ from those of the Blacks of Brazil and Haiti and do not appear to be directly connected with the African cults which have been described.

We shall give here only very concise information about [128] the ritual of these cults and we shall mainly try to show their place in relation to the institutions of the Refugee Blacks, and their functioning.

787 Possession is believed to be the entrance into a man of a suprahuman entity (divinity, spirit of an ancestor) which, during a variable length of time generally rather short (a few minutes to several hours), uses the body of this man and expresses itself through his mouth. They say that the man has become the horse - hasi - of the divinity. They also say: "Such-and-such a divinity entered his head." The possessed person is called [114] gadu mɛ̃ (gadu umɛ̃ for a woman). This word has been translated improperly as "priest" in the first works treating of the Refugee Blacks.

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Aluku Name	Identification	Use
Sɛ̃ŋgaafu	Costus cylindricus (zingiberaceae)	cult of the Papa gadu and of the Ampuku
Malimbelimbe	Piper sp. (?)	----
Filli (Hɔligɔɔ)	Chamaesyae sp. (?) (euphorbiaceae)	----

828 Beliefs Concerning the Human Person and Its Development
Ancestor Worship

[171] The Refugee Blacks of the various tribes have precise and identical conceptions on this subject, which are found also, more or less mixed with Christian conceptions, among the West Indian populations of African origin. For them, man is formed of three elements: the body, the yɔrka which may be translated by personality, and a higher principle called akka.

[184] It goes without saying that among the Boni, who have not elaborated these conceptions and received them from the Djuka, [28] nobody is capable of discoursing on them. But numerous conceptions having to do with magic and to the relationships with the ancestors permit of rather reliable cross-checking.

774 The akka. It is not possible to translate akka (1) by soul in the

1. This word appears to be a deformation of kla (Agni-Baoulé), word to which a very comparable meaning is attached.

sense we understand it. The akka is an immortal divine element

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538 Doubtless for the same reason, nothing is found in most of these tales which brings to mind a moral inspired by a concept of good and evil. Now it is the thief and the swindler who triumph, now they find one cleverer than they. It is easy to see that for the storyteller all that is on the same plane; he simply guided his story on what seemed to him most amusing. [522] As for the audience, it always laughs at the loser. One single tale out of 14 (No. 1) expresses a practical moral: "That is why you must not deceive people, for there are people who are cleverer than you."

Most of the tales and proverbs have already been heard many a time by the Refugee Blacks without that lessening their pleasure. More than the story itself, they appreciate the verve of the storyteller, his mimicking talent, the always new variations he knows how to give of a hackneyed theme.

538 All these tales were recorded with the tape recorder and [28] then were studied carefully with respect to vocabulary and syn- [26] tax. We have stayed very close to the actual wording and as far as possible have kept the special Aluku turns of phrase, especially African interjections which reinforce the verbs. The tedious passages which had to be summarized are put in parentheses. Tales nos. ten to 14 are summarized.

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Tales

1) The Bearded Rock

One day Anansi went into the bush. He walked until ... he saw a rock, a rock with a beard. He cried: "Bearded rock!"

6:Hurault--478 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

APPENDIX

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TABLE OF THE POPULATION OF THE BONI VILLAGES

as of January 1, 1958, arranged in alphabetical order

Classification. The classification of the population has been made by village of residence.

For each woman, we have indicated her successive unions and the children issuing from them. The sign † means deceased, the sign ÷, divorce. The sign ÷ † means that the husband is dead, but after the break-up of the union.

The women's listings preceded by an asterisk • indicate that the listing may be regarded as complete from the demographic point of view (children living and deceased).

A double asterisk •• indicates that the listing can in addition be regarded as complete from the point of view of successive marriages and divorces.

The name of each individual is printed in boldface once only, where he may be considered as residing habitually. The total of the names in boldface gives immediately the population figure for the village.

Children under 15 years are considered to be living with the persons responsible for their education. If details about this could not be obtained, they are considered to be living with their mothers.

Each listing bears a number, for example Dju D7, permitting one to find the place of the individual in the genealogical table. In the example indicated, reference must be made to the table of the Dju lo, line D, no. 7.

Let us recall that part of the names have been replaced, by request of those concerned, by fictitious names.